

[East Side Folk Stuff]

Duplicate

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Irving Nicholson

ADDRESS 4507-15th Ave.

DATE November 1, 1938

SUBJECT EAST SIDE FOLK-STUFF

1. Date and time of interview October 27, 1938

2. Place of interview

These stories are based on interview with a home relief investigator, who pointed out that these events are supposed to be confidential and that he would prefer to be kept anonymous. The stories told concern former clients of his.

3. Name and address of informant

4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant.

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5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you

6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK

FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Irving Nicholson

ADDRESS 4507-15th Ave. Brooklyn, N. Y.

DATE November 1, 1938

SUBJECT EAST SIDE FOLK-STUFF

She was 65 years old and lived on Cannon Street. Remarkably preserved for a woman of her age she shows all the earmarks of her past grandeur. Once she was the belle of Vienna, wealthy, young, and beautiful. Her misfortunes started with the death of her husband six months after marriage. She came to America, alone and poverty-stricken.

Every time the home relief investigator paid her a visit, she would tear her dirty garments from her bosom to exhibit nonexistent scars.

"They do it," she would say, "my lovers, with acid they do it. They are mad at me. They are zealous."

She explained that she encountered these jealous youths at street intersections. Oh, they were very bold, they were, and not like the normal men one generally meets.

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The case worker finally persuaded her that the agency was able to arrange a truce with these omnipresent assailants. Shop on a street where these youthful devils never appear, the worker told her. Weeks 2 later the woman beamed triumphant.

"The devils, they have run away, they are gone. They have lost me. Ah they are gone."

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There is a family of five on home relief. The wife, about 40, the husband, just returned from an insane asylum, and three children.

The woman feels that her husband is lost, that he is not her real husband anymore. No money, no husband, she says, sneeringly. But who then is her husband?

The woman says that the relief agency is her husband because the relief agency brings in a check at regular intervals.

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Pat O'Brien had too many children, especially for a guy who couldn't get any work, try as he might. The family went on relief and one of the social agencies suggested that the wife be sterilized. The wife was removed to a hospital but was found to be too weak to undergo the operation. The agency then got after Pat. But he was determined not to give in to such indignities. And so he disappeared.

But Pat had resources. Every night he would climb over the roof and into the house where his wife and children anxiously awaited him.

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